

resented the men and women of vision of the age. In the hearts of these few persons of the passing old world there had sprung up anticipations and forebodings of the truth. They had been long waiting for the coming of the promised Messiah and thru their expectant and waiting souls passed those visions that drew them to the cradle of Jesus. A study of the groups that came is replete with meaning and helpfulness. They represent in a miniature way the reception that Christ should afterwards meet with in the world. Let us look at these groups.

First came the shepherds from the field. An angel of the Lord had appeared to them and the glory of the Lord had shone about them, telling them of the birth of a Savior and singing to them of a new era to be ushered in. To the words of the angel and the song of the heavenly multitude they added personal investigation. They came and saw. It must be noticed in all this that Christianity makes its appeals to the individual. It works for the race thru the individual. Individual regeneration precedes social regeneration. This is the programme of Christianity. Here many reformers fail. Unregenerate man would make a pandemonium out of Paradise. If man's environments are bad, man made them bad and only man can make them good. Christ was the true social reformer and the gospel is the best method of procedure.

And notice too the character of these Judaean shepherds,—simple, sincere, hard-working shepherds. Is it strange that Christianity should have first come to them with its message? Would not the other way around better suit much of the thought of our age? Do not churches prefer to build "up town" and our preachers to address the more refined and cultured of their audiences? But should the angels not have come to them first? Can not a man whose hands are horny with toil, and in whose heart is love for his faithful wife and prattling babes love both God and man with truth and sincerity? Is it not true that learning and wealth and refinement often underrate the capacity of the so called lower classes of society? And do they not possess all the elements necessary to a recognition of the truth? The gospel is addressed, therefore, to all men and is presented not as an after fruit of human culture, but as the first and necessary step of all preparation for true development. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." The church should not defer preaching the gospel to men and nations until they can read and write. The gospel should come at the very beginning. Let us learn the lesson from the angels of heaven and preach the gospel of Redemption to the illiterate, the impotent, the downcast and the degraded.

And after the shepherds the wise men came. They were very unlike the shepherds. They lived in a much larger world and represented the thought and aspirations of their age. Tacitus and Suetonius tell us that in the regions from which they came the expectation

prevailed that a king whose power should eclipse all others was to appear in Judea. They too participated in the common desire of the age and to this God responded. If their search at first was one of speculative and scientific curiosity, it is quite certain that it led them to the truth. But they too, in common with the shepherds had a vision. What was to the shepherds an angel was to them a star.

The angel and the star led both to the cradle of Jesus. Beautiful thought! Culture and ignorance must meet at the same shrine. The want of the soul is a common want. The shepherd and the wise men, the Lord and the servant have the same need. It was this that Jesus came to give. The learned man must receive pardon and strength where the uncultured man finds it. The wise men came from afar; and so the more real knowledge a man has the keener and stronger is his appreciation of the truth, and the farther he is willing to go in search for it.

What these men did we should also do. It is every man's privilege to know God thru Jesus Christ. Personal experience of the worth of the gospel is the great demand of the age. The external things of Christianity must reproduce and manifest themselves in terms of actual experience. That which will make Christianity of most worth to each one of us is the subjective-personal, experiences of pardon, peace and purity. The outer world is real, but the inner is the more real and permanent. The only satisfactory and successful life is to be found in the harmony of both. May we at this auspicious Christmas tide go again to our spiritual Bethlehem. Let us follow the examples of the two groups studied. May we behold there the reality of Jesus as our Savior and Lord. May our lives be filled with light and love as we gaze upon him, and offer him our best gifts. And may we each receive his anointing for service not only for Christmas day but may we receive it each day of the year. May a happy Christmas come to every reader of this whose eyes shall be opened to receive the visions of God in these momentous days of His kingdom on earth.

The Mission Field

From the National Capital

A merry Christmas.—The wise man, (Prov. 15 : 15) tells us that a merry heart means a continual feast. There is but one way to have the merry heart, and that is to have the "pure heart," and no one has the pure heart who fails to appreciate God's great Christmas gift to the world. To be pure in heart is to see God—see him in everything and at all times—see him in the cloud as well as sunshine—see him because the great Life-giver hath said "In the world ye shall have tribulation, but be of good cheer, I have overcome the world." The merry heart, the good cheer, the continual feast can not be ours only upon the one condition: we must appreciate the gift. O, how many there are

who not only do not appreciate God's great gift, but turn away from it with scorn and contempt! There will be those who will read these lines who have trampled the price of this gift,—the precious blood of Jesus,—trampled it as an unholy thing under their feet. Some who read this and who claim to appreciate the gift, will have plenty of money to spend on things that perish with the using simply to please the fleshly desires, but who will have but the bare leavings, if anything, to give to him who is the giver of every good and perfect gift. When we make presents we like to see them appreciated. And appreciation can not keep still,—it will speak out in some way,—if in no other way, by the tear of gratitude stealing down over the cheek.

Let us then have a merry Christmas because we have learned to appreciate the great Gift that brings us the Christmastide with all of its hallowed associations and pleasing memories, and may we remember that to appreciate the gift is to know by personal experience that it is, indeed, more blessed to give than to receive.

Visit to Linwood, Maryland.—This is a small town on the Western Maryland Railroad near the home of wife's people. Spent one week there and preached six sermons. I have much reason to believe that the future will prove this to be a fruitful field for the "gospel-alone" people. And altho we had but one confession, yet we had a good interest from the beginning and many bright promises for the future. Had we been able to have continued the meetings a few nights, I believe we would have reaped a rich harvest, but the Lord will not suffer his word to return unto him void, and we have committed all to him. Many who used to call me "brother" failed to attend the services because of the change in my church relations, but we shall continue to pray for them, believing that the time will come by and by when many of them will see the true light of the gospel, when the evil shall be removed and they will see no one, "save Jesus only." This was done without expense to the mission of Washington as the free-will offerings more than met expenses. We hope to soon see the time when there will be a number of congregations surrounding the capital city. When the work here once becomes self-supporting we shall then be able to visit such places oftener, if it be the Lord's will.

Grateful acknowledgements.—For a considerable time for some cause but little support has been rendered by the brotherhood, and as the work here is not yet self supporting, it has placed us at some disadvantage, but quite recently a few have come to the rescue and we want to thank them right now, for we are in a position to appreciate just now, and we trust that our prayers will continue to be answered until our needs will have been met. Sister Annie Keys and Brother S. A. Wine, Quicksburg, Va., Sister Griffith, of Masontown, Pa., and "A. B." of Altoona, Pa., these have each sent \$1.00. And the Johnstown, Pa., church comes along